

2009

***BENJAMIN M. KING* HUMAN RIGHTS ESSAY CONTEST Grades 5-12**

2009 Topic:

“Listen to a Life”

(Local & National Contest!)

Columbus Human Rights Commission

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2009 Essay Topic: "Listen to a Life"

What can you learn when you listen to a life? Young people can become more aware of their own dreams and goals - and what's needed to achieve them - when they hear the real-life stories of older adults. Young people can develop an appreciation for the ongoing value and contributions made by older adults-- thereby helping to prevent age discrimination in our society. The national Listen to a Life Essay Contest is also an opportunity to build closer connections between young and old as they get to know each other in new, often unexpected ways.

***LOCAL WINNERS WILL BE ENTERED IN
THE NATIONAL CONTEST!***

Essay Contest Directions:

To enter, a young person who is a 5th-12th grader interviews an older person over 50 years (cannot be a parent; they can be a grandparent, older friend, mentor, neighbor, nursing home resident, etc.) about their hopes and goals through their life, how they achieved goals and overcame obstacles, or how dreams may have changed along the way. What life advice can the older person share? The young person then writes an essay (300 words maximum-- all words counted) based on the interview.

OPTIONAL USE OF THE TOOLKIT:

YOU **MAY** USE INFORMATION PROVIDED TO YOU IN THE **"ESSAY CONTEST TOOL BOX"** TO ASSIST YOU AND INSPIRE YOU BEFORE YOU WRITE YOUR ESSAY, AND HELP YOU UNDERSTAND THE TOPIC THEME!

- The Toolkit includes the last year's winning essays, interviewing tips, and possible interview questions. Use of the toolkit is optional for students and educators who find it helpful.
- Reading through last year's winning entries is a good start to crafting an appropriate essay. As you'll see, the judging committee isn't looking for a laundry list of dates and life facts. Rather, they're looking for an evocative, creative story that captures the essence of a person's life, or a critical moment or experience.
- To help with your entry, you can read through the Life Interview Tips and sample Life Interview Questions (you don't have to use the questions; they're designed to give you ideas and inspiration).

TEACHER INSTRUCTIONS

2009 HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION ESSAY & ART CONTESTS

This year, the Human Rights Commission is again sponsoring two contests in each division, an essay and an art work contest for the students in Bartholomew County in **grades five through twelve**. There will be a winner for each contest - the essay contest and art contest - from each division: division 1 - grades 5 & 6 (elementary school); division 2 - grades 7 & 8 (middle school); division 3 - grades 9 through 12 (high school). Students are invited to enter either the essay contest or the art contest or **students may enter both**. The intent of the contests is to create an awareness and appreciation of our community's diversity and for human rights. You are invited to share this information with your students and encourage their participation. You may want to include the essay and art topic in your classroom or youth group curriculum or you may want to leave it as an enrichment or special project for individual students.

1. **ENTRY FORM:** Please make sure that each student has a fully completed entry form attached to their essay or artwork and that their name appears **ONLY** on the entry form and **NOT** on their essay or the artwork. The information on the entry form is necessary for us to contact contest winners.
2. **ESSAY CRITERIA:** The essays for the local award will be judged for students' recognition of key human rights values and for responses, which include creativity, specifics and personal experiences as related to the topic. Concise writing is favored. **(See National Essay judging Criteria on page 5)**
3. **DEADLINE:** **Monday, February 16, 2009**

Hand Delivery to the Commission:

You may hand deliver your essays or artwork to the Human Rights Commission, no later than **5:00 p.m. Monday, February 16, 2009**. No entries will be accepted after that date.

OR

For Essay/ Artwork Pickup at Schools:

Entries for pick up should be taken to your school's office **by 9:00 am February 16, 2009**, and marked "ATTENTION HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION ESSAY CONTEST/ ART CONTEST". Inform the office staff that you are leaving them for pick up by the Human Rights Commission. **To arrange for your essays/artwork to be picked up, please call the Human Rights Commission office, 376-2532 prior to delivery of the essays to your school office and leave a message that you want your students' essays/artwork picked up. Please call to schedule pick up by 9:00 am, Friday, February 13, 2009. Feel free to call several days ahead to schedule pick up on Monday, February 16, which allows the Commission time to make plans for pick-up.**

4. **LOCAL JUDGING & AWARDS:** A panel of community members will judge the essays and artwork. Essays and artwork will be assigned numbers so judges will not know the identity of the students.

Contest winners, their parents, teacher and their school will be notified in the days following the judging. Winners will receive a \$100 savings bond, a collection of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s essays and complimentary tickets (for the student, his/her parents, and his/her teacher) to the Commission's annual dinner on March 30, 2009, where the student will be recognized. Winning essays will be published on the Commission's website, annual report, and submitted to local newspapers. Winners will receive further information about the dinner.

5. NATIONAL CONTEST ENTRY INFORMATION, JUDGING CRITERIA AND AWARD INFORMATION

Winners of the local 2009 Benjamin M. King Human Rights Essay Contest will be submitted, by the Columbus Human Rights Commission, as entries in the national "Listen to a Life" Legacy Project Essay Competition. Many schools, agencies and community groups run their own version of this contest and then enter the best entries in the national contest. The Human Rights Commission believes this a great way to highlight the important contributions of seniors in our community and connect the generations in our community!

NOTE: Entries must be 300 words or less, be a true story about an older person's life, and will be judged by a committee based on the following criteria: 1/3 appropriateness to theme; 1/3 writing quality; 1/3 content originality.

NATIONAL AWARD INFORMATION:

Winners of the 2009 Benjamin M. King Essay Contest will be entered into the nation-wide "Listen to a Life" Legacy Contest, and will be eligible to potentially win a Lenovo ThinkCentre computer. The M Series Education Model computer is preloaded with the Adobe Digital School Collection software (Adobe Acrobat Pro, Photoshop Elements, Premiere Elements, and Contribute) and Vital Source Library Edition. It has an Intel processor, 1 GB RAM, a 100 GB hard drive, DVD-CD combo drive, and comes with a 19-inch Lenovo ThinkVision flat-panel monitor.

If you have further questions or need other assistance, please call Arlette Tinsley, Director or Lorraine Smith, Deputy Director, # 376-2532 or humanrights@columbus.in.gov